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RIGHTS OF CHILDREN

SECURITY COUNCIL
Forty-ninth year

Letter dated 15 December 1994 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i.
of the Permanent Mission of Yugoslavia to the United Nations
addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit the statement, appeal and protest adopted at the symposium entitled "The family, the rights of the child and development in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia", held at Belgrade on 13 and 14 December 1994.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 101, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Dragomir DJOKIĆ
Ambassador
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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Annex

Statement, appeal and protest adopted at the symposium on "The family, the rights of the child and development in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia", held at Belgrade on 13 and 14 December 1994

I. STATEMENT

Within the programme marking the International Year of the Family, 1994, a symposium entitled "The family, the rights of the child and development in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia" was held at Belgrade on 13 and 14 December 1994. One hundred and twenty scholars, scientists, university professors, government officials, experts from the fields of health, education and social and children's protection, and representatives of Yugoslav and foreign non-governmental humanitarian organizations, as well as representatives of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), took part in the symposium.

The symposium was preceded by numerous activities related to the problems of the family, children and the development of the population in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, such as the seminar of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, entitled "Basic population policy: goals, institutions and measures"; the conference of the Institute of the Serbian People, entitled "Children witnesses and victims of war in the former Yugoslavia", held at Sremski Karlovci; and the seminar of the magazine for social sciences and philosophy "New Thought", entitled "The social policy of a society in transition".

The project entitled "Refugee and host family survey" (UNHCR/Institute for Social Policy, Belgrade) has been completed; the Federal Government has adopted the "Report on the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia", and the Belgrade UNICEF Office has worked out an analysis entitled "Children and women in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia - a situation analysis".

The Federal Government has also adopted reports on population policy, the social situation and implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women and sent them to the United Nations; those reports dealt with individual segments of the whole problem of the family.

The Governments of the Republic of Serbia and the Republic of Montenegro upgraded their laws on the social protection of children and of the family, with the aim of mitigating the unfavourable consequences of the current economic and social situation for the social security and position of children and the family.

Local authorities, supported by Yugoslav and international non-governmental humanitarian organizations and specialized institutions of social care for children and of education, health and social protection have made every effort

to prevent a drastic deterioration of the overall living conditions and the social situation of many Yugoslav families.

In discussing, among other things, the conditions in which the universal rights of men, children, women and the family are realized, the participants of the symposium concluded that, because of unfavourable changes, including the breakup of Yugoslavia and the war in Yugoslavia's immediate vicinity and, in particular, because of the imposition of sanctions by the Security Council, not only have the results of many years of improving the quality of life of the family, democratization of the family, emancipation of women and promotion of the development needs of children been threatened, but many Yugoslav families and children have been brought to the verge of poverty. Many processes which aggravate the position of the family and children are long-lasting, and the negative consequences of some of them are irreparable. Innocent families and children are the principal victims of sanctions.

II. APPEAL

Expressing their human, parental and professional responsibility, the participants of the symposium appeal to the Secretary-General and the Security Council to initiate an early procedure for the lifting of sanctions as proof of their responsibility for the principles and goals set forth in the documents of the United Nations on the universal rights of men, children, women and the family. The innocent suffering of Yugoslav children and families should be not only a reason to lift sanctions against Yugoslavia, but also a warning that something like this never be applied against any people. Nobody has the right to deprive the children of any people of a happy childhood for the purpose of achieving any goals whatsoever.

III. PROTEST

The participants in the symposium entitled "The family, the rights of the child and development in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia", held on 13 and 14 December 1994 at Belgrade, express their outrage over the continuation of the discriminatory practice towards the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia of the sanctions committee established by Security Council resolution 724 (1991). The decision to refuse the import of gas for humanitarian needs is the result of unacceptable political manipulations. The humanitarian needs of the population of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, particularly of the most vulnerable categories, have again been ignored in an unacceptable way.